

*Making a Difference  
Touching Lives  
Giving Hope*

2015  
Annual  
Report

Missouri State  
Rehabilitation  
Council for the  
Blind



# Return on Investment

In FFY 2015, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind closed 234 client cases in Competitive Employment

Earning annual salaries totaling \$5,103,296.

Those 234 individuals paid \$1,037,556 in Federal and State Taxes.

In 3.8 years, these blind/visually impaired Missourians will pay back in taxes what it cost to assist them into successful employment.

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# *From the Chairman of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind*

Dear Fellow Missourians:

As Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), it is my honor to submit, with my colleagues, the 2015 Annual Report. The SRC is responsible for reviewing, analyzing and advising Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), an agency in the Missouri Family Support Division (FSD), on its policies and provision of rehabilitation services to Missourians who are blind or visually impaired. This Council is dedicated to working with RSB to assist visually impaired Missourians to become self-supporting and fully participating members of society.



In 2014 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law setting into motion major changes to workforce development throughout the nation. WIOA is designed to improve the coordination of employment and training services across federal agencies, strengthen collaboration with state and local partners, and provide Americans with increased access to training, education and other support to succeed in the job market and in their careers.

In 2015 the Departments of Labor and Education completed the public comment and rule making processes for WIOA implementation. Since completion, RSB has been working tirelessly to transform policy and processes to be positioned to meet the new guidelines for WIOA. RSB continues to lead on change like this, and will improve access and meet the growing challenges facing our fellow citizens.

It is the Council's goal that this report provides an informative overview of the activities of RSB; and we would be pleased to answer any questions about this report, the operations of RSB, or the work of the Council.

Respectfully Submitted,

Clay C. Berry  
State Rehabilitation Council Chairman  
Director of Education & Rehabilitation at Alphapointe



# Council Members

The membership of the Council is comprised of no more than 21 individuals appointed by the Governor, with the following representation mandated by the Rehabilitation Act.

At least one representative from each of the following:

- Statewide Independent Living Council
- Parent Training and Information Center
- Client Assistance Program
- RSB Vocational Counselor
- Community Rehabilitation Program service provider
- State education agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities
- State workforce investment board
- Disabilities group representing individuals who are blind
- Representative of individuals who have blindness, have multiple disabilities, and have difficulty representing themselves due to disability
- Business, labor and industry
- Advocacy groups for individuals with blindness or other authorized representatives of individuals with blindness who are unable to represent themselves
- Current or former recipients of VR services

The Deputy Director of FSD/RSB as an ex-officio member.

# Committees

## Evaluation Committee:

Chair: Betty Farley

The evaluation committee handles anything that the Council does to evaluate the performance and/or operation of RSB, such as surveys and annual reports.



## Governmental Affairs Committee:

Chair: Sheila Wright

The governmental affairs committee works on things happening at the state and federal level and that are governmental in nature.



## Planning Committee:

Chair: Paul Ajuwon

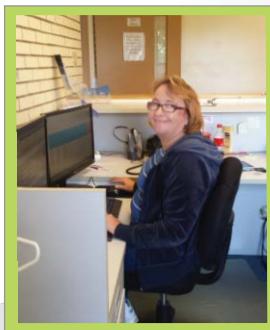
The planning committee's primary responsibility is the state plan and any other planning operation of the Council. The business network issues will be included in this committee.



## Membership Committee:

Chair: Donna Borgmeyer

The membership committee works on the membership status of Council members, as well as recruitment of potential new members.



## Program & Policy:

Chair: Gene Fleeman

The program policy committee handles new policy and or program items from RSB rather than waiting until the next Council meeting.

# *Purpose*

**The Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind was established in February 1993 by Executive Order 93-01 to:**

Act as a forum through which citizens with blindness, parents, providers, and other interested Missourians can voice their opinions and constructive criticisms, make recommendations and give public recognition for services being performed on their behalf by RSB;

Serve jointly with RSB in its activities to improve the services, programs, and facilities for individuals with blindness and visual impairments;

Receive from RSB information concerning the intents and objectives of RSB so that the Council, in turn, can pass this information on to individuals with blindness.



# *Functions*

**The SRC's functions include, but are not limited to, acting in partnership with RSB to:**

Review, analyze, and advise RSB regarding RSB's performance of responsibilities under title I of the ACT, relating especially to eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services; the extent, scope and effectiveness of VR services that RSB provides; and functions performed by State agencies that potentially affect the ability of blind individuals to achieve rehabilitation goals and objectives.

Assist RSB with the development and review of the State goals and priorities; assist in the preparation of the State plan.

Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with, VR services and other functions performed by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for performing functions for blind individuals.

Prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor of the State of Missouri, to the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the U. S. Department of Education, and to the Director of FSD.

Coordinate with other councils within the State;

Provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between FSD, RSB and the Statewide Independent Living Council and Centers for Independent Living in Missouri;

Select a pool of individuals to serve as impartial hearing officers for VR applicants and recipients who wish to appeal a decision of RSB.



## *From the Director of the Rehabilitation Services for the Blind*

Dear Fellow Missourians:

This annual report, presented to you from the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind for fiscal year 2015, provides information on the Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind employment program for individuals with visual disabilities.

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) has completed another successful year of providing services to assist blind and visually impaired Missourians. In the fiscal year 2015, RSB completed planned services to assist a total of 272 blind or visually impaired individuals to obtain or retain employment. RSB is proud to say that for the last ten years we have met the federal performance standard of providing services to assist more blind and visually impaired Missourians to work than in the previous years.

There are many different alternative techniques and skills used by blind and visually impaired individuals to overcome the barriers to independent living and economic self-sufficiency and these are significantly different from the accommodations required by persons with other disabilities.

The process of instructing the blind and confronting the issues and visual demands of everyday life requires separate and categorical agencies serving blind, highly trained, committed personnel who deliver specialized services and the commitment of the separate State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, whose members demonstrate a thorough understanding of blindness and the resultant issues in our society.

In the coming year, Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind will be implementing the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act which was passed and signed into law in the summer of 2014. There will be some major changes in how we operate our Vocational Rehabilitation Program. At the writing of this letter, we do not know what all the changes will be, but RSB is very confident that as we move forward, we will be able to provide those services which blind and visually impaired Missourians have always expected and relied upon to assist them.

In closing, I, along with the Council, offer our sincere appreciation for your interest and support in serving blind Missourians.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Faust  
Deputy Director  
Rehabilitation Services for the Blind



## ***Year in Review***

The SRC analyzed the results of client satisfaction surveys which were received from RSB clients at the time of case closure. The comments and concerns of the clients were discussed by the SRC.

There were discussions about the Deaf-Blind Cooperative Agreement between RSB and Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to jointly serve eligible deaf/blind individuals. They discussed how to educate the schools in the needs of students with multiple disabilities.

Transition services have been discussed quarterly. The council looked at regulations, goals and how to get educators and clients more involved.

SRC asked how RSB is preparing for the new Unified English Braille. RSB completed a pilot program for teaching braille, which was considered a success. Braille Code Master is an accelerated learning process. How school districts view students learning braille and reading based assessments were also discussed.

With the implementation of the Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act (WIOA), the SRC has requested quarterly updates on the upcoming changes, specifically the affects on children's services and transition.

Public Forums were held quarterly in various locations across the state.

SRC has encouraged RSB to do more for outreach to employers. RSB does local health fairs, job fairs, and had a booth at the State Fair, as well as other types of outreach. The SRC looked into the referral process of RSB.

## ***Public Forum***

*The SRC continued to hold public forums throughout the state, allowing individuals to voice opinions and concerns about the services of RSB. To assist those with difficulty traveling, the council provides phone conferencing.*

In 2010, the SRC began inviting speakers to the public forums to further educate those who attend the public forum. This year's speakers were:

**November:** Kansas City, MO - Keith Roderick, Coordinator of RSB's Policy Development, presented on Transition and VR services.

**February:** Joplin, MO - Vince Cianfrone from NanoPac demonstrated the DaVinci video magnifier, as well a handheld electronic magnifier.

**May:** Jefferson City, MO - Janet Moore educated the public and the SRC on the services available through the Center for Braille and Narration Production Center.

**August:** Millicent Odhiambo, Coordinator, Disability Services at South East Missouri University (SEMO). Millicent spoke about the disability services available through SEMO.

# *Success Story of Melissa Ham*

Melissa Ham was born with Macular Degeneration, an inherited eye disease that resulted in legal blindness primarily through the central vision. In 2010 her position as a paraprofessional was eliminated. At that time she sought out services through Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) to help her find a job.

Melissa is tenacious and adapts tremendously well. RSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Katherine Cronin, began working with Melissa to determine her vocational goal, utilizing her unique skillset, to explore employment options and to solidify her job search and resume. RSB provided Melissa with Vocational Exploration, as well as Job Search and Development services. Due to her vision loss, Melissa faced difficulty reading print and electronic media. RSB purchased low vision aids such as glasses, hand held magnifiers, and I-Zoom Magnification software to allow Melissa to access and read print and electronic media.



Additionally Melissa's vision loss made mobility more difficult to orient herself to new places or to use visual landmarks as a guide. Melissa worked with RSB's Mobility Specialist, Jane Thomas, to feel secure when traveling independently to and from work and other activities.



Still there were times that the going got rough. Melissa's VRC and other RSB staff provided ongoing support and guidance when she needed it. In May 2015 Melissa was hired as a Donation Sorter and Production Worker with Goodwill Industries. She has done so well that her supervisors state that she has the aptitude to lead and train new hires. Her supervisor expresses that Melissa is a terrific worker and an asset to the company.

# Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

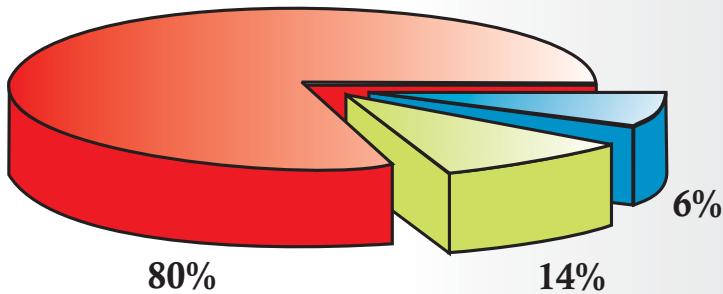
Individuals who have a severe visual disability encounter some common barriers to employment. Common barriers recognized are: access to print information, transportation, negative attitudes regarding the skills and abilities of the blind, and marketable 21st Century job skills. Rehabilitation Services for the Blind provides valuable services that effectively address these barriers and more.

In federal fiscal year 2015, RSB successfully rehabilitated 272 Missourians in pursuit of their employment goal. The following data profiles show those successful closures:

## Rehabilitation Rate

72.15%

Competitive Employment 219   
Self- Employment 15   
Homemaker 38 



**In 2015, through the services of RSB, 272 individuals have been able to gain or retain employment. Their occupations are as follows:**

Management	25	Protective Service	3
Business and Financial	11	Food Preparation and Food Serving	14
Computer and Mathematical	8	Building and Grounds Cleaning	8
Architecture and Engineering	4	and Maintenance	46
Life, Physical, and Social Science	2	Personal Care and Service	18
Community and Social Service	17	Sales and Related	53
Legal	3	Office and Administrative Support	2
Education, Training, and Library	16	Farming, Fishing and Forestry	2
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	7	Construction and Extraction	11
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	5	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	6
Healthcare Support	6	Production	Transportation and Material Moving

# *Success Story of Elisha Harden*

In the summer of 2008, Elisha Harden was diagnosed with a progressive eye disease called Optic Neuritis and contacted Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB). She gradually lost more vision over a period of five years until she lost all of her vision. When she first came to RSB, she thought she wanted to work as a counselor for people with disabilities. However, Elisha continued to struggle with all of the adjustments related to her vision loss.



Elisha participated in comprehensive blindness skills training from Alphapointe in 2009 and 2010. This training included alternative skills of blindness including braille, orientation and mobility, daily living skills, and assistive technology. Elisha was later diagnosed as hearing impaired. At that time RSB purchased hearing aids for her.

In an effort to increase her income and to build work experience, Elisha began working on the pen production line at Alphapointe in 2012. Though it was not Elisha's ultimate goal, she used the opportunity to gain work experience and increase her self-confidence. In August 2013, Elisha's new Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC), Rachel Labrado, provided guidance and counseling to Elisha as she considered a call center position at Alphapointe. As a result of their counseling discussions Elisha changed her employment goal to working in customer service. This position seemed to fit with her strong interpersonal skills; however, her computer and assistive technology skills were not strong enough to be hired for the position. To assist Elisha in achieving her employment goal, RSB provided a new computer for Elisha to use at home along with additional rehabilitation engineering services. The next time Elisha was interviewed for a call center position, she was hired by Alphapointe.

Mrs. Labrado observed Elisha's continued growth in both confidence and skill. Mrs. Labrado encouraged Elisha to apply for a front desk receptionist position with the Coalition for Independence (CFI). Job development services, including On-the-Job-Training (OJT), resulted in Elisha being hired as CFI's front desk receptionist in January 2014. RSB continued to provide job analysis and rehabilitation engineering to address any training and disability needs by the client and the employer. Additional rehabilitation engineering was used to resolve issues with CFI's proprietary software.

CFI provided a work computer, screen reading software and camera/door/alarm system. RSB provided additional adaptive technology such as labeling system, telephone light indicator, dual channel headset and scanner/reader system.

Coalition for Independence has expressed that Elisha Harden is a valued employee and her work performance is great. They appreciate the valued job development and placement services offered by RSB and are interested to hire other qualified people, like Elisha, to work at CFI. Elisha enjoys her position as a receptionist and continues to fulfill her dreams of working with persons with disabilities, as CFI's mission is to enhance the rights and lives of persons with disabilities.

# *FFY 2014 Blind Agency Standards and Indicators*

## SUMMARY OF RSB PERFORMANCE

Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, requires the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to establish evaluation standards and performance indicators for the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program that include outcomes and related measures of program performance. RSB passed 5 of the 6 federal performance indicators in standard 1, and the required minority service rate ratio in federal performance indicator 2.1. Looking ahead, because of WIOA, the Standards and Indicators we have been judged by will be radically changed. At the time of this report, we have not been made aware by RSA what these changes will be. RSB is confident that they will perform very well in the future as they have in the past.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

There are a total of 80 state vocational rehabilitation agencies or commissions that provide rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities in the United States and associated territories. Currently, 24 states have a separate vocational rehabilitation agency or commission that provides services exclusively for consumers who are blind or visually impaired. The alternative skills of blindness are markedly different from the skills required by other disabled persons. The methodology of instructing the blind and confronting the issues of blindness in our society require the development of specialized service programs, with service delivery by specialized personnel.

## *Highlights of 2015*

- ♦ RSB served 4,134 individuals with blindness/visual impairments in 2015.
- ♦ 1,217 individuals were served in the Older Blind Independent Living Program and 649 closed successfully rehabilitated.
- ♦ 339 individuals received case management services in the Prevention of Blindness Program, screening 3,383 individuals for intra ocular pressure and other eye conditions.
- ♦ The Vocational Rehabilitation Program served 1,874 individuals, closing 272 in successful employment.
- ♦ 473 children received services in the Children's Services Program.
- ♦ 231 individuals were served in the Independent Living Program and 79 closed successfully rehabilitated.
- ♦ 37 Business Enterprise Program facilities, including 1 military installation, 30 managers, employing 839 people, with gross sales at \$37,383,811.

*During federal fiscal year 2015, RSB opened 397 new cases and served a total of 1,860 consumers in the Vocational Rehabilitation program.*

The average annual earnings for a successfully Rehabilitated Client is \$21,809

The following information is based on that amount:

MO State Taxes Paid per Rehabilitated Client, \$1,624

Federal Taxes Paid per Rehabilitated Client, \$2,810

Total Taxes Paid per Rehabilitated Client, \$4,434

Total Combined Yearly Taxes Paid by all Rehabilitated Clients  
\$1,037,556

\$14.66

Average Hourly Wage

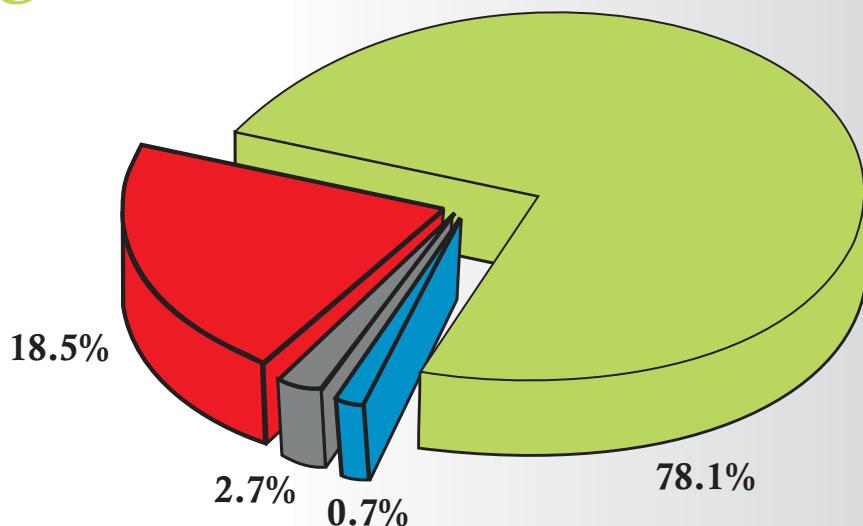
Average Hourly Wage at Closure



## *State Fiscal Year 2015*

### *Missouri Funding Sources*

- █ Federal Funds
- █ GR Funds
- █ BEST Funds
- █ Donations



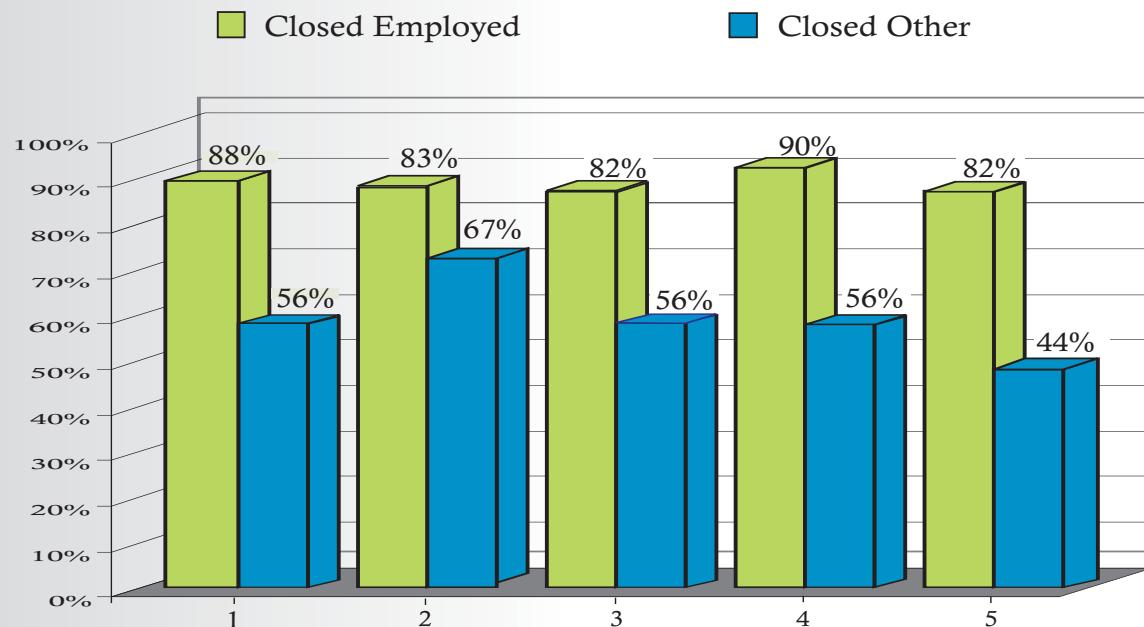
# *Consumer Satisfaction Survey*

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys are administered to individuals after closing their Vocational Rehabilitation case with RSB. These surveys are administered on a monthly basis. Two different surveys are sent: a 14-question survey is sent to individuals whose cases are closed in competitive employment, and a similar 11-question survey is sent to individuals whose cases were closed in any status other than competitive employment.

The following is a random selection of those questions from the survey and their consumer satisfaction with RSB services.

## **Competitive Employment Overall Satisfaction Level 86%**

## **Status other than Competitive Employment Overall Satisfaction Level 51%**



1. The choice of services available from RSB was sufficient to meet my needs.
2. I received services from RSB in a reasonable amount of time.
3. RSB staff helped me build my confidence in my abilities.
4. My rehabilitation plan was individualized to meet my goals.
5. I am pleased with the overall outcome of my experience in the vocational rehabilitation program provided by RSB.

## *Success Story of Chad Rohr*

In October of 2003, at the age of 13, Chad Rohr was in an accident involving an all-terrain vehicle (ATV). The accident resulted in him being in a coma and a traumatic brain injury. In addition, Chad lost the use of one of his arms and was totally blind. Though he initially went through some tough times emotionally, he decided that he had to try to stay active and remained positive. After completing extensive rehabilitation services, Chad chose to attend his home school, as well as the Kansas School for the Blind. While in high school, Chad participated in athletics competing in the shot put and discus. He also earned his Eagle Scout award.

In April of 2007, Chad became a client of Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) as a transition client under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Through a series of vocational evaluations with his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC), Belinda Caldwell, Chad decided on a vocational goal in the field of Social Work. To address mobility concerns, Chad worked with Mobility Specialist, Doug Pappert, as well as working on daily living skills with Rehabilitation Teacher, Pamela McMickle. With the encouragement of his VRC and his family, Chad participated in Alphapointe's Summer Transition Employment Program, STEP, their Technology Camp and College Prep. These services led Chad to attend the University of Central Missouri where he lived in a dormitory, as well as participated in a fraternity. While attending school, Chad received a paid internship from Alphapointe where he taught assistive technology.

In January 2015 Chad was hired as a Rehabilitation Teacher for RSB. There he uses his recent teaching experience, experience as a person who is blind and visually impaired, and technology background to work with RSB clients. He is responsible for teaching the alternative skills of blindness that allow RSB clients to gain or maintain their independence.

Chad credits his family, his VRC, and the myriad of services provided by RSB and its partners for his success.



# *Vision for the Future*

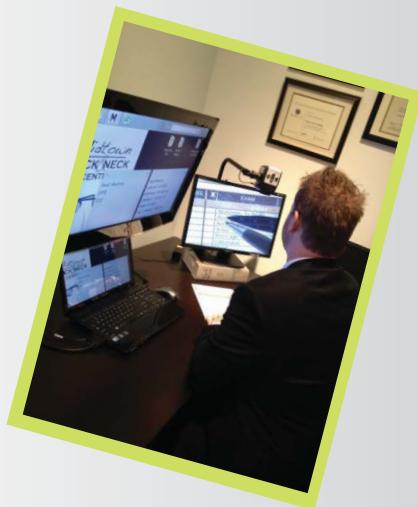
RSB's Vision Statement reads:

An organization of highly skilled and professional staff at all levels who through their synergism create a dynamic agency that is a State and National leader in blindness rehabilitation.

As RSB strives to create opportunities for the personal and vocational success of blind or visually impaired clients, the SRC believes that with the proper training, alternative skills and assistive technology, those individuals who are blind can be vocationally, socially and economically competitive.

The SRC will continue to work cooperatively with RSB to improve the services offered to meet what we consider to be the unique rehabilitation needs of clients with visual disabilities. The following top five strategic priorities were developed by the SRC to ensure ongoing success for visually impaired Missourians:

1. Promote the full inclusion, participation, and integration of Missouri blind and severely visually impaired in the economic, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of society.
2. Through the SRC's advisory capacity assure that appropriate education and rehabilitation services increase the employment rate of blind and visually impaired in Missouri.
3. Promote and assure the continuation of specialized vocational rehabilitation services to consumers who are blind and severely visually impaired through specially trained professional staff with unique skills and knowledge of blindness.
4. In partnership with RSB, develop, agree to, and review the annual state goals and priorities in preparation of the state plan and evaluate the effectiveness of services.
5. In partnership with RSB, conduct statewide comprehensive needs assessment to determine the unmet rehabilitation needs of the blind and severely visually impaired in Missouri.



# 2015 District Map

Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind  
**800-592-6004**

Kansas City North  
615 E 13th St. Rm 409  
Kansas City MO 64106  
816-889-2677

Kansas City South  
4309 East 50th Terr. Ste B  
Kansas City MO 64130  
816-929-7171

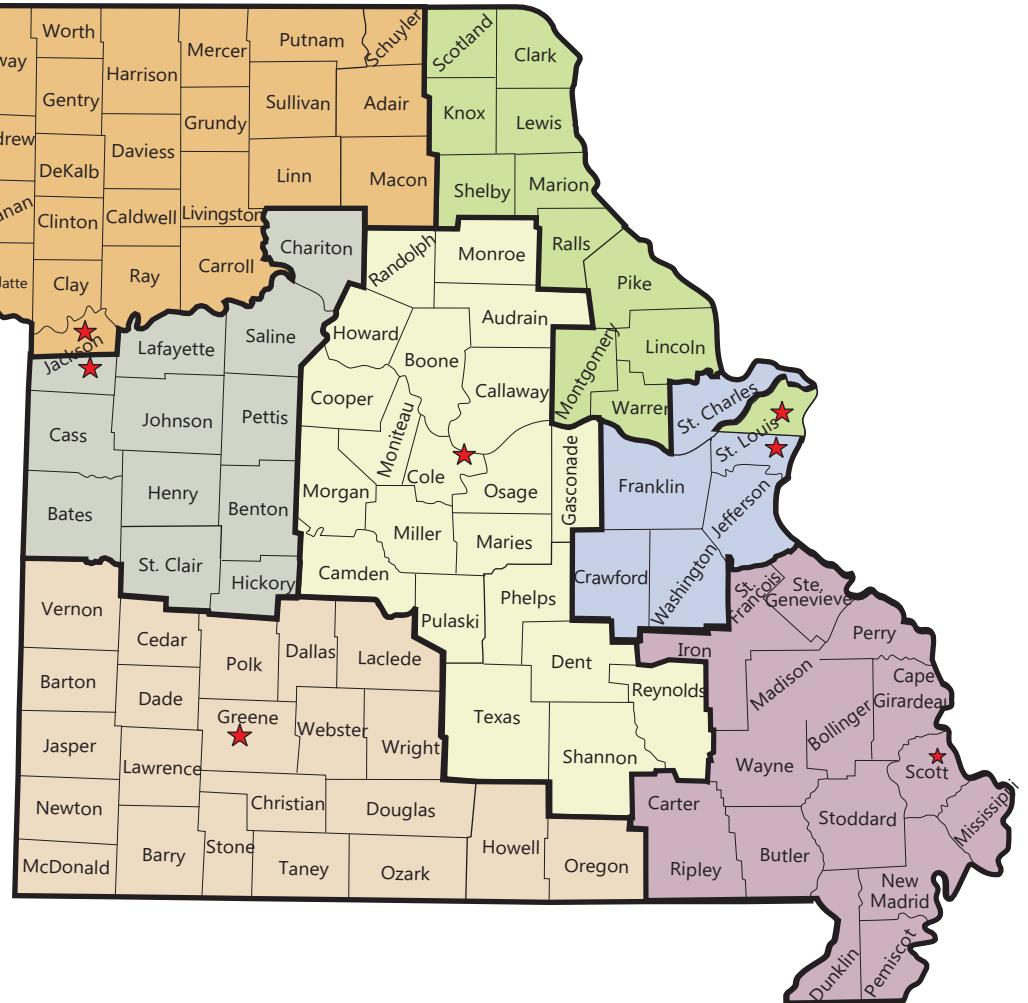
Southwest  
149 Park Central Sq. Rm 640  
Springfield MO 65806  
417-895-6386

Mid-MO  
3418 Knipp Dr. Ste A-2  
Jefferson City MO 65102  
573-751-2714

St Louis North  
9900 Page Ave. Ste 105  
St. Louis MO 63132  
314-264-7601

St Louis South  
3867 Magnolia Ave.  
St Louis MO 63110  
314-933-7311

Southeast Office  
106 Arthur St Ste E  
Sikeston MO 63801  
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[www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/rsb/index.htm](http://www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/rsb/index.htm)